

Mayors' Resource Guide on Behavioral Health Issues

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What Is Behavioral Health and Why Does it Matter to Mayors?

The term “behavioral health” refers to both mental health and substance use, and recognizes how the two are often inter-related. Behavioral health problems include the misuse of alcohol or drugs, mental and substance use disorders, and suicide. Mental and substance use disorders include conditions such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, and addiction to alcohol or prescription drugs. Preventing, treating, and supporting recovery from behavioral health problems is essential for communities to be healthy, safe, and successful. You can help ensure that everyone in your community has the best chance to succeed by addressing the behavioral health needs of your communities. You can do this by supporting the prevention and treatment of mental illness and supporting recovery from mental illness. Mayors and municipal leaders like you can have an important role in providing leadership and support to address the behavioral health needs of children, adults, and families in their communities.

Unaddressed behavioral health problems may have a negative effect on the economy for cities, towns, and counties. Costs may increase across systems including health care, emergency and social services, special education, services for homelessness, law enforcement, criminal justice system, and health insurance for municipal employees. They may impact the productivity of local businesses and health care costs, impede the ability of children and youth to succeed in school, and lead to family and community disruption.

Fortunately, many people with behavioral health problems can recover from these conditions and live healthy and productive lives. Many effective prevention, treatment, and recovery programs are available for mental and substance use disorders. Many mental and substance use disorders can be prevented and if symptoms do appear, and the severity of many of these problems can be reduced through programs focused on health promotion, illness prevention, and early treatment intervention.

In addition, the passage of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) means that insurance groups that offer coverage for mental health or substance use disorders must provide coverage that is comparable to medical coverage. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) significantly extends the reach of MHPAEA's requirements. Because of the health care law, most small group and individual market health plans must also include coverage for mental health and substance use disorders as one of the ten categories of Essential Health Benefits, and that coverage must comply with the federal parity requirements set forth in MHPAEA.

Mayors and local public officials can have a unique role in shaping community responses that will promote recovery, prevent behavioral health disorders, reduce the impact of behavioral health problems when they do occur and ensure that needed treatments and services are available. As a Mayor, city or county official, you can help amplify the message that the U.S. Department of Health and

Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is working to bring to communities and the nation: *“Behavioral Health is Essential to Health; Prevention Works; People Recover; and Treatment is Effective.”*

What You Can Do to Engage Your Community

Engaging to prevent or reduce behavioral health problems in any community can help save money and improve lives by:

Reducing

- health care costs;
- emergency department use;
- prescription drug misuse;
- absenteeism from work and school;
- special education costs;
- crime;

Preventing

- child maltreatment;
- tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use;

Improving

- academic achievement, graduation rates, and college entry;
- community environment;
- community partnerships;
- family stability; and
- wages and productivity.

Community Conversations on Mental Health

SAMHSA created a toolkit that can assist communities in organizing community conversations about mental health. Creating a local community conversation about mental health issues can be an effective way to bring community members together to determine how best to approach raising awareness and identifying ideas for solutions best suited for a specific local community.

Local conversations can be formal or informal, big or small, and include a group of individuals who mirror the demographics and diversity of a given community or a group of persons who are simply interested in discussing the issues and ways to move forward.

Local community organizations may be willing to organize and support these conversations and especially to collaborate with a mayor's office to follow-up on needed steps. The goal is a more informed and engaged citizenry willing to help increase mental health literacy and awareness and committed to helping those who need help are identified and assisted in receiving it.

You can get copies of the toolkit at <http://www.samhsa.gov/communityconversations/>.

Potential Next Steps

Are you ready to implement policies, programs and strategies that promote positive mental and behavioral health and prevent behavioral health problems? The following steps could help move your community forward. Your mental health and public health agencies can collaborate together to assist with these processes.

1. Assess Needs

- Conduct a scan of your community to discover the risks and strengths present and how they affect the behavioral health of young people in your community.
- Conduct a needs assessment to gather current data about your community's behavioral health systems services and supports. Identify strengths, challenges and areas where there are gaps.

2. Build Capacity

- Reach out to others who have lead successful community efforts focusing on behavioral health;
- Identify local leaders who are committed to take steps to address this issue and who are knowledgeable about behavioral health.
- Consider convening a summit on preventing and reducing mental, emotional, and substance use disorders in your community—ensuring representation from multiple sectors that can have an active role. Stakeholders might include:
 - Members of the business community
 - Groups involving families and parents of young people with mental health or substance abuse challenges
 - Representatives with lived experience of mental illness or substance use disorders
 - Youth and family leaders
 - Local college student representatives
 - Local charitable funders and foundations, faith-based groups
 - School superintendents, board members, association/union representatives, teachers and students
 - Municipal and county law enforcement, city/county prosecutors, city/county parole and probation officers, emergency medical services and other first responders, crisis response teams and trauma resources
 - Local nonprofits (soup kitchens, housing providers, employment services, and others)
 - Local scientific experts and officials – researchers/university/college professors
 - Behavioral health providers or providers of prevention services
 - Local Tribal representatives

3. Plan

- Identify goals, objectives, strategies and timelines
- Convene stakeholders. Consider using an effective facilitator or process leader to engage those present. Begin by creating a vision for behavioral health in your community. Include questions that are informed by your data regarding what to increase and what to decrease in the community.
- Consider the use of science informed community prevention frameworks such as:
 - **The Strategic Prevention Framework:** <http://captus.samhsa.gov/access-resources/about-strategic-prevention-framework-spf>
 - **Communities that Care:** <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Communities-That-Care-Curriculum/PEP12-CTCPPT>
 - Address the unique needs of different groups in your community paying attention to differences in culture, language, religion and gender or sexual identity
- Discuss how to build on community strengths and move or reduce barriers;

4. Implement

- Determine needed next steps to address these issues.
- Engage others to help, create a timeline, and create a way to share early wins.
- Communicate with your community about successes.

5. Evaluate

- Consider developing an evaluation plan from the beginning. This plan could help your community be clear about what it is working to accomplish and how it plans to achieve these outcomes. An evaluation plan can be a valuable tool to help your community implement, monitor and continuously improve and refine its efforts. For more information about developing an evaluation plan, go to:
http://nrepp.samhsa.gov/Courses/ProgramEvaluation/NREPP_0401_0010.html
- Develop processes to continually use data to inform decisions.

Potential Events to Engage Your Community

Are you looking for a way to engage your community in a conversation about behavioral health? Throughout the year, the nation recognizes many events related to mental health and substance use which can provide a great opportunity to get a discussion started. Here is a list of a few of the major events:

1. National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day:

When: Second week in May

Program Description: National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day helps raise awareness about the importance of children's mental health. Over 1,100 communities participated in 2012. Cities and towns across the nation participate in the annual National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day by planning local events on the declared day during the second week in May each year, and throughout the year. As a mayor, you can work with your community to identify local priorities and then use the Proclamation Template to declare your city's commitment. http://www.samhsa.gov/children/pnb_proclamation.asp. The Awareness Day materials include monthly data points, ideas from other communities for community activities and resources to help make your communities efforts a success. These resources can be used with local news and media outlets, social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

Additional information: Examples of community activities from previous years' events can be reviewed at <http://www.samhsa.gov/children/state.asp>

2. National Prevention Week and Substance Abuse Prevention Week:

When: May (National Prevention Week) and October (Substance Abuse Prevention Week)

Description: National Prevention Week is an annual health observance dedicated to increasing public awareness of, and steps to address, substance abuse and mental health issues. This observance is an opportunity to join with other individuals, organizations, and coalitions in your community to promote prevention efforts, educate others about behavioral health issues, and create and strengthen community partnerships. National Prevention Week usually takes place in May each year during Mental Health Month.

Substance Abuse Prevention Week usually occurs in October. National themes often emphasize that the prevention of substance abuse and promotion of mental health starts with us and with

the choices each of us makes in our own lives. Through our choices, we can set an example of health and well-being for others. With our voices—whether spoken or written—we can raise awareness of behavioral health issues and help create healthier and safer communities.

Communities can join in planning for the next annual National Prevention Week.

Additional information:

<http://beta.samhsa.gov/prevention-week>

3. National Wellness Week

When: September

Description: National Wellness Week is part of SAMHSA’s Wellness Initiative. The Wellness Initiative was established to increase life expectancy by promoting wellness as part of the recovery path for substance use, mental health problems, and trauma. Mayors can play an active role in this effort by signing the Pledge for Wellness on behalf of their communities and by participating in National Wellness Week in September in a variety of ways. A mayor can partner with clinicians, recovery centers, and faith- and community-based organizations to encourage local participation in National Wellness Week, sharing messages of how the dimensions of wellness are part of recovery from trauma and/or mental health and substance use problems. A mayor may decide to issue a proclamation for National Wellness Week, participate in local events, or speak to the media about the importance of decreasing the disparities for people with mental health and substance use problems in the community.

Additional information: <http://www.promoteacceptance.samhsa.gov/10by10/default.aspx> and email 10x10@samhsa.gov for further information.

4. National Recovery Month

When: September

Description: An annual event held in September to recognize the gains made by those who have attained recovery from substance use and mental health disorders. The observance also recognizes the contributions of addiction and mental health treatment providers to the lives of those who have achieved recovery. Each year, millions of people gather in walks, rallies, town hall meetings, picnics, and other celebratory events in recognition of the contributions being made by those who have achieved recovery and in recognition of the role that treatment

programs, mutual support, and other recovery efforts are playing in the lives of those in recovery. The observance targets individuals in recovery, their families, treatment providers and health care workers, civic and elected leaders, the private sector, and the general public and calls on everyone to “*Join the Voices for Recovery.*” Mayors can find sample proclamations in an [Information Kit](http://www.recoverymonth.gov/Recovery-Month-Kit.aspx) (<http://www.recoverymonth.gov/Recovery-Month-Kit.aspx>) that is adaptable to their needs, as well as sample media materials and op-ed pieces that facilitate public involvement in this effort. Communities and states can benefit from engaging in this observance, as millions of Americans are living in recovery from substance use or mental disorders nationwide.

Additional information: www.recoverymonth.gov.

5. Mental Illness Awareness Week

When: October

Description: In 1990, Congress established the first full week of October as Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW) in recognition of the efforts of the National Alliance on Mental Illness to raise awareness about mental illness across the nation. Since then, mental health advocates across the country have joined with others in their communities to sponsor activities, large or small, for public education about mental illness. MIAW often coincides with the National Day of Prayer for Mental Illness Recovery and Understanding and with National Depression Screening Day, both also in early October. MIAW provides a good opportunity for mayors to raise community awareness of the challenges of mental illness and the importance of screening for depression or other mental health issues. It is also an opportunity for local media to promote stories about mental health issues and persons who have experienced mental illness and are contributing to their families and their community.

Please visit www.SAMHSA.gov for additional SAMHSA resources.

Suggested Resources

Below are some useful behavioral health resources that you can consider as you plan your community activities. Resources denoted with an asterisk (*) are provided by external organizations. The inclusion of these resources does not constitute an endorsement of these organizations. These organizations and their respective websites do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of SAMHSA or HHS.

Prevention/Promotion Resources:

1. Mental Health First Aid Training*

Description: Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an interactive 12-hour course that presents an overview of mental illness and substance use disorders in the United States. Those who take the 12-hour course to certify as Mental Health First Aiders learn a five-step plan encompassing the skills, resources, and knowledge to help an individual in crisis connect with appropriate professional, peer, social, and self-help care. Individuals who participate in this public education program help their community identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

Additional Information: The MHFA training is operated and disseminated by the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare. They can be reached at 1701 K Street, NW., Suite 400, Washington, DC 20006; phone: 202-684-7457; email: Communications@thenationalcouncil.org or visit www.TheNationalCouncil.org and <http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/>

2. Three Bold Steps: A Toolkit for Community Leaders: Safe Schools/Healthy Students*

Description: Schools, family, youth, and community partners are the target audience for this guide. Community and school leaders learn to address challenges such as poverty and violence; mental health and substance abuse issues; growing truancy, expulsion, suspension, and dropout rates; disproportionate rates of achievement among children and youth of color; and shrinking resources. The Actions in Bold Step 1, 2 and 3 will guide you through the process of forging an effective school-community partnership. Each action will contain an overview, voices from the field, and appropriate resources and tools.

Additional information: <http://3boldsteps.promoteprevent.org/>

3. The Good Behavior Game*

Description: The Good Behavior Game teaches children to have control over their attention and not be distracted by negative behavior from others, and it works by reinforcing appropriate social and classroom behavior by teams of children. The strategy works by addressing early aggressive and inattentive behavior that, left unchecked, can evolve into a well-documented downward developmental trajectory and lead to multiple, costly problems in later life.

Additional information: Contact Dennis D. Embry, Ph.D., President and Senior Scientist, PAXIS Institute, P.O. Box 31205, Tucson, AZ, 85751; phone: 520–299–6770; email: dde@paxis.org; or Jeanne Poduska, Sc.D.; Director, Center for Integrating Education and Prevention Research in Schools, American Institutes for Research; email: jpoduska@air.org; phone: 410–347–8553.

4. Triple P Positive Parenting Program*

Description: The Triple P Positive Parenting Program is a multilevel system or suite of parenting education and support strategies for families with children from ages 0–12, with extensions to families with teenagers ages 13–16. Triple P is designed to prevent social, emotional, behavioral, and developmental problems in children by enhancing their parents’ knowledge, skills, and confidence. The program, which also can be used for early intervention and treatment, is founded on social learning theory and draws on cognitive, developmental, and public health theories. The program offers parents five intervention levels of increasing intensity to meet each family’s specific needs.

Additional information: Triple P America, phone: 803–451–2278, email: contact.us@triplep.net

5. Suicide Prevention:

Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

Description: The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Since its inception, the Lifeline has engaged in a variety of initiatives to improve crisis services and advance suicide prevention. Additionally, materials and resources are available to provide to your community.

Mayors can assure individuals and groups in the community that *“No matter what problems you are dealing with, we want to help you find a reason to keep living. By calling 1-800-273-TALK*

(8255) you'll be connected to a skilled, trained counselor at a crisis center in your area, anytime 24/7."

Additional information: <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

Suicide Prevention Resource Center:

Description: The Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) is the nation's only federally supported resource center devoted to advancing the [National Strategy for Suicide Prevention](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/national-strategy-suicide-prevention/full_report-rev.pdf) (http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/national-strategy-suicide-prevention/full_report-rev.pdf). Your community can benefit from understanding the strategic priorities and engaging in the development and implementation of community strategies. The SPRC provides technical assistance, training, and materials to increase the knowledge and expertise of suicide prevention practitioners and other professionals serving people at risk for suicide. These resources can be helpful to your community's efforts to promote collaboration among a variety of stakeholders and organizations in your community and can play a role in developing your community's strategies in preventing suicide and self injury.

Additional information: <http://www.sprc.org/>

Treatment Resources:

1. Crisis Intervention Team Training

Description: The crisis intervention team model is a strategy for improving the outcomes of law enforcement interactions with people experiencing a behavioral health crisis. The model was first developed by the Memphis Police Department in response to a shooting by an officer of a man with mental illness. Training for law enforcement officers is only one component of the model. Community collaboration, integration of people with lived experience and family members, and a law enforcement-friendly crisis stabilization center are also essential elements of the crisis intervention team model.

Crisis intervention team training is intended for sworn officers of law enforcement agencies and first responder/911 dispatchers. The model has been adapted for corrections officers working in jails and prisons.

Additional information: <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Crisis-Counseling-Assistance-and-Training-Program-CCP-/SMA09-4373>.

The SAMHSA Gains Center at <http://gainscenter.samhsa.gov/> emphasizes the provision of consultation and technical assistance to help communities achieve integrated systems of mental health and substance abuse services for individuals in contact with the justice system.

2. National Child Traumatic Stress Network*

Description: The NCTSN provides information and resources to help communities serve the needs of traumatized children and their families and raise public awareness of the scope and serious impact of child traumatic stress on the safety and healthy development of America's children and youth.

Additional information: <http://www.nctsn.org/>

3. Treatment Locator:

Description: SAMHSA provides an online resource for locating mental health treatment facilities and programs. The Mental Health Treatment Locator section of the Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator lists facilities providing mental health services to persons with mental illness.

As a Mayor, you might consider creating a locator for substance use treatment and mental health in your own community, region and state. This might be in the form of an information card of city resources with the logo from your city—perhaps a wallet-sized card that can be carried by residents of your community. These might be placed in your local health departments, hospitals, clinics, schools, faith organizations, and neighborhood settings.

Additional information: <http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment/index.aspx>.

Recovery Support:

SAMHSA has a wide array of programs and information resources to support recovery. For more information on SAMHSA's resources and working definition of Recovery, please visit: <http://www.samhsa.gov/recovery>.

Appendix

Frequently Asked Questions about Mental Health:

Where can I find resources to help young people and their families in my community who have mental health challenges?

It is important to have a clear picture of what your community's needs, gaps and strengths are in responding to the mental health needs of young people and their families. A comprehensive system of care requires leadership and cross system efforts. Work closely with local, state, foundation, business, association, family, neighborhood, youth, national partners and others to stay on top of information and resources that may assist your community in advancing its mental health planning efforts. Beyond what your community resources are, SAMHSA offers a [Mental Health Facility Locator \(http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/\)](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/) for mental health and substance abuse treatment programs and resources nationwide.

Where can I find information about mental health, mental illness, or mental disorders?

Public information about mental health and mental illness is available at www.mentalhealth.gov. Publications on mental health topics can be ordered online from [SAMHSA Publications \(http://store.samhsa.gov/home\)](http://store.samhsa.gov/home). The following list includes examples of organizations that may be able to provide you with additional information:

- [American Psychological Association \(http://www.apa.org/\)](http://www.apa.org/)
- [Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health \(http://ffcmh.org/\)](http://ffcmh.org/)
- [National Alliance for the Mentally Ill \(http://www.nami.org/\)](http://www.nami.org/)
- [National Association of School Psychologists \(http://www.nasponline.org/\)](http://www.nasponline.org/)
- [American Psychiatric Association \(http://www.psych.org/\)](http://www.psych.org/)
- [American Association of Community Psychiatrists \(http://www.communitypsychiatry.org/\)](http://www.communitypsychiatry.org/)
- [American Psychiatric Nurses Association \(http://www.apna.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=1\)](http://www.apna.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=1)
- [National Council for Behavioral Health \(http://www.thenationalcouncil.org/\)](http://www.thenationalcouncil.org/)
- [National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery \(http://www.ncmhr.org/\)](http://www.ncmhr.org/)
- [National Association of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Directors \(http://www.nacbhdd.org/\)](http://www.nacbhdd.org/)
- [National Institute of Mental Health, Public Information Branch \(http://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml\)](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml)
- [SAMHSA Publications \(http://store.samhsa.gov/home\)](http://store.samhsa.gov/home)

The above referenced list of organizations is not comprehensive and does not constitute an endorsement of these organizations. These organizations and their respective websites do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of SAMHSA or HHS.

What resources are available to help my community with suicide prevention efforts?

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) considers suicide a significant public health problem. One activity to address Suicide Prevention is the [Suicide Prevention Resource Center \(SPRC\)](http://www.sprc.org/) (<http://www.sprc.org/>). The SPRC provides prevention support, training, and resources to assist organizations and individuals to develop suicide prevention programs, interventions and policies, and to advance the [National Strategy for Suicide Prevention](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/national-strategy-suicide-prevention/full_report_rev.pdf) (http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/national-strategy-suicide-prevention/full_report_rev.pdf). The [National Strategy for Suicide Prevention](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/national-strategy-suicide-prevention/full_report_rev.pdf), collaborates and directs necessary prevention services and programs that are both public and private. Federal collaborators include the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov/) (<http://www.cdc.gov/>), the [Health Resources and Services Administration](http://www.hrsa.gov/index.html) (<http://www.hrsa.gov/index.html>), the [National Institutes of Health](http://www.nih.gov/) (<http://www.nih.gov/>), the [Office of the Surgeon General](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/) (<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/>), the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](http://www.samhsa.gov/) (<http://www.samhsa.gov/>), and the private collaborators include advocates, clinicians, researchers and suicide survivors.

The National, 24-hour, toll-free telephone suicide prevention lifelines are available at:

- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/) (<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>) at 1.800.273.8255
- [National Hopeline Network](http://www.hopeline.com/) (<http://www.hopeline.com/>) at 1.800.784.2433

These resources provide immediate assistance and connect the caller to the nearest available suicide prevention and mental health service provider.

Please visit www.SAMHSA.gov for additional SAMHSA resources.